

1986

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### Recommended Citation

Porter, P. (1986). Amalgamation from the Perspective of College Council: The Case of the Western Australian College of Advanced Education. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 11(2).  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.1986v11n2.4>

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## AMALGAMATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF COLLEGE COUNCIL:

### THE CASE OF THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

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#### **Introduction**

When considering institutional amalgamations in tertiary education one is reminded of a typical subtitle in introductory anthropology texts: "Man - The Problem Solver" (apologies to feminists). What the section usually goes on to discuss is how humans (supposedly unlike "lower" forms of life) use their intelligence to solve, in the first instance, the "problems" of nature, and at later stages the problems that result from human solutions to the problems of nature. Politically imposed tertiary amalgamation policy resembles nothing if not the creation of solutions guaranteed to create problems, the solution of which will create further problems and so on. There would be few post-amalgamation tertiary institutions in Australia which did not question the value of the enormous expense of energy that their sentence incurred whatever other advantages may be evident.

It is the intention of this paper to discuss some of the real issues associated with the single amalgamation directive in tertiary education in Western Australia: the recently formed Western Australian College of Advanced Education (1982). The focus of this paper will be on the issues primarily as they appear to a governing body - the College Council. The extent to which amalgamation fall-out is capable of dominating the agenda and activities of a governing body five years on is significant and will be emphasized in this discussion.

\* The author is the Chairperson of the Council of W.A.C.A.E. and has held this position since September 1984. She is also a Senior Lecturer in the sociology and politics of education at Murdoch University. This paper is a revised version of a paper prepared for the Conference on Tertiary Institutional Amalgamation held at the University of New England, Armidale, New South Wales, in February 1986. The views in this paper reflect the personal views of the Chairperson of Council, and do not speak for the Council as a whole nor the administration or staff of the College.

## Early Political Issues

When Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser announced in Parliament in April, 1981 that thirty tertiary institutions with high proportions of teacher education must amalgamate or receive no funding from January 1982 onwards, the reactions varied around the states. In Western Australia the Liberal government of Sir Charles Court was initially hostile to the proposal that three WA Colleges amalgamate. At that time in Western Australia the university sector comprised the University of Western Australia and the small newly established (1975) Murdoch University. The college of advanced education sector was composed of the large and rapidly growing W.A. Institute of Technology, and four smaller colleges whose base had originally been teacher education: Claremont (1902) the oldest, with a long history in primary teacher training; Nedlands (1968), traditionally oriented to secondary training in association with U.W.A.; Mount Lawley (1970), with a mixed primary and secondary programme and beginning to diversify into the liberal arts; and the large Churchlands College (1972), also mixed primary/secondary with a major business course component. A fifth Teachers College, Graylands, had recently been closed through state government initiatives.

Three state government cabinet meetings resulted in a firm 'no' from the Court government to the Fraser government. However, in the Alice in Wonderland organization of tertiary education in Australia where the states have the responsibility and the federal government has the money, it is hard to resist such a clear directive. Particularly when the Court government had already rebelled strongly against an earlier Williams' Committee Report (1979) suggestion that the activities of the U.W.A. and Murdoch be merged. The fact that the college proposal was not a cross university-advanced education sector one meant that some of the potentially difficult staffing issues in amalgamation would not arise. Within the Colleges themselves the reaction was mixed but not totally opposed to amalgamation. Indeed, the state branch of the C.A.E. Academic Staff Association supported amalgamation.

However, there was also strong opposition particularly from traditionalists in primary teacher training who believed in the single purpose institutional model, from those concerned about imposed centralization, from those whose careers had developed strong loyalties to a particular campus, and from those concerned that *their* college and *their* programmes might be taken over in the power struggle that was already clearly emerging between key figures on the different campuses. In the event the Court government gave in and asked the Western Australian Post Secondary Education Commission to organize the amalgamation. W.A.P.S.E.C. undertook this task despite the personal opposition to amalgamation, in principle, of the then Chairperson, Dr Wal Neal.

Up until this point *how* amalgamation might proceed if indeed it was to do so had been the subject of much speculation, some of it highly volatile. The actual policy directive from the federal government had included only Nedlands, Claremont and Mount Lawley in its plan, specifically excluding Churchlands which was seen as larger and already sufficiently down the path of diversification from teacher education. However, clearly its fate was bound up with the others. Various possibilities of amalgamation speculated about included Mount Lawley joining W.A.I.T., Nedlands joining the U.W.A. (a long standing proposal), and Mount Lawley and Churchlands joining on their own.

However, the W.A.P.S.E.C. view supported a total C.A.E. three campus amalgamation. Furthermore, Dr Doug Jecks, at the time Principal of Churchlands, believed that if the other institutions amalgamated leaving Churchlands on its own, it was likely that Churchlands would become the smallest institution, possibly become neglected, and potentially lose its competitive edge. Hence Churchlands informed W.A.P.S.E.C. of their interest in joining the amalgamation. W.A.P.S.E.C. established an Interim Council for the W.A.C.A.E. which included community representatives from some of the College Councils, the Director General of Education, the head of the federal Academic Staff Association who was also a staff member at one of the Colleges, a Liberal politician, the Churchlands Principal (Jecks), and W.A.P.S.E.C. itself.

The first major step taken by the Interim Council was the decision to appoint Dr Doug Jecks, Principal of Churchlands, as Director of the about-to-be formed College. In Western Australian political circles Dr Jecks' long standing association with the Liberal Party was well known and presumably contributed to his acceptability to the government. However, it was also true that, have voluntarily joined the amalgamation he was seen in some quarters as more 'neutral' than an appointment from one of the other campuses might have been. In addition given the compressed time scale which the federal government had forced upon the state a search for someone outside the system altogether would have been difficult to organize. The W.A.P.S.E.C. view was also that this was a case where local knowledge was essential given the other difficulties associated with amalgamation and they advised the government as such. Nevertheless, the fact that the four colleges has a long history of competition in teacher education, and that autonomy from the State Education Department had only come in 1974 (i.e. they all came from the same "family") there was still some disgruntlement with the choice within what was about to become one institution.

In summary the immediate political issues which arose in the Western Australian case were associated with:

- The lack of concern by the federal government for local circumstances, state government views, *or* even those of the state post-secondary education coordinating body. Aside from the real problems in amalgamation that this caused, it also raised the hackles of federal-state relations which tinged much of the exercise.
- The mixing of three issues of concern to the federal government-desire for a general cut in tertiary education funds in the interests of economy, the need for a reduction in teacher education due to demographic factors, and philosophic support for the academic diversification of colleges of advanced education. On the other hand the federal government appeared to expect that amalgamation would solve all these problems. On the other hand it meant that many people actually involved in the amalgamation were confused as to the purpose of the exercise and unconvinced that the solution would solve the part of the problem with which they were concerned anyway.
- The forced involvement of the state government and the W.A. Post Secondary Education Commission combined with the very short time framework imposed ensured that the initial two major decisions – the choice of an Interim Council and the choice of the Director – would become highly political.

### Early Implementation Issues

All of the issues which emerged during the first stages of the implementation of the new amalgamation policy were tinged by the restricted finance available. Federal policy insisted that there be a 'genuine amalgamation', 'real savings' and a 'single governing council'. To ensure the savings the federal authorities *reduced* the funds available to the newly amalgamated colleges. As the 1982 Annual Report of W.A.C.A.E. points out:

'In the case of the Western Australian College this was particularly regrettable as recurrent funding support per EFTS was already among the lowest in Australia and following the additional cut the College was the second poorest college (on the basis of recurrent funding per EFTS) in Australia among the 44 colleges which continued to operate from the beginning of 1982'. W.A.C.A.E. (1982, p.7)

The decline in funding can be seen in the following Table 1.

TABLE 1

### FEDERAL FUNDING FOR W.A.C.A.E.

	Total Grant	Approved EFTS	\$ per EFTS
1979	\$29.0 m	5675	\$5100 (100%)
1980	\$28.2 m	5813	\$4850 (95%)
1981	\$28.9 m	5892	\$4950 (97%)
.....Amalgamation.....			
1982	\$28.9 m	5909	\$4900 (96%)
1983	\$28.6 m	5949	\$4800 (94%)
1984	\$29.7 m	6208	\$4800 (94%)
1985-1987 Triennium	\$33.2 m	7115	\$4507 (89%)

W.A.C.A.E. Annual Reports, 1983-1984

The poor relative position of W.A.C.A.E. amongst the amalgamated colleges has continued and can be seen in Table II.

TABLE II

### FEDERAL FUNDING : \$ PER EFTS IN AMALGAMATED COLLEGES

Colleges	\$ EFTS
Sydney	5,111
Philip	4,863
Brisbane	4,745
Melbourne	4,713
S.A.C.A.E.	4,709
Victoria	4,607
W.A.C.A.E.	4,507

W.A.C.A.E. Annual Report, 1984

The federal funding decline associated with amalgamation was particularly directed at teacher education, and as teacher education still made up the overwhelmingly largest proportion of the newly amalgamated College, there was great concern amongst academic staff about possible staff reductions. The immediate problem for the College was that of the significant decline in teacher education students. In 1978 there were some 2000 newly graduated teachers in W.A. but by 1982 this had dropped to 1200 students, partially as a result of some self restraint on the part of the training institutions, but mostly because potential students came to realize the lack of availability of teaching positions and made other career choices. However, during this period the number of teacher education staff in the independent colleges had remained virtually unchanged. The order of magnitude of the reduction for W.A.C.A.E. can be seen in the fact that between 1979 and 1987 there will eventually be a total reduction of 928 EFTS in teacher education. This equates to about 70 full time equivalent academic staff in education in the College over this period. Thus the concerns in 1981 by staff about possible redundancies were real ones.

The policy of the Interim College Council at the time of the beginning of the amalgamation (January, 1982) was to try to protect the jobs of the permanent or tenured staff. In attempting to minimize the impact of the required reductions in teacher education there was an effort wherever possible to transfer teacher education staff to other teaching areas, to the management area of the College, or to offer opportunities for retraining. In fact, the College has been able to protect its permanent academic staff (although the methods of doing this have raised other problems which will be discussed later). Combined with the usual (and undoubtedly unusual) retirements, resignations, and ending of secondments, it has been the part-time and fixed-term contract staff who have taken the brunt of the blow and been let go at the conclusion of their contracts. Since there had been a large number of these kinds of appointments made in teacher education from 1976 these academics did make up a significant proportion of the staff. Hence their departure contributed to a lowering of morale keeping *all* staff sensitized to the tenuousness of their employment.

The Interim College Council also moved quickly to establish a Programme Review Committee whose terms of reference were to:

'give attention to the long-term development of the academic programme, including staging processes, transitional regulations and the location of existing courses within the various occupational disciplines'. Liddelow (1982, p.1)

They were also to give particular attention to the development of business programmes; the structure, content, location and scheduling of teaching education programmes; the establishment of new courses and disciplines; the development of centres of excellence on individual campuses; the

assessment of students; the provision of external studies and summer schools; and the provision of recurrent education in teacher studies. The four-man committee included a representative from each of the campuses; an academic from Mount Lawley, an academic from Claremont, an academic and Staff Association President from Nedlands and the Vice Principal from Churchlands – significantly the composition did not include the Principals from the various institutions.

The Programme Review Committee, working quickly as directed, presented its Report on the reorganization of the academic programme in September, 1982. This very comprehensive Report recommended the establishment of a multi-purpose, multi-campus college with an academic structure based on Schools of Study and Departments rather than campuses, a college-wide committee structure, and a single college-wide administrative structure. The five schools were to be Arts and Applied Sciences, Business, Community and Language Studies, Education, and the Academy of Performing Arts. Within these five schools were to be thirty-three teaching departments. In general, so far as possible, courses of high demand or general activities were to be on all campuses, while courses of limited demand or specialized activities were to be concentrated on one campus. Because of the School and Department organization, courses taught on multiple campuses were to have the same content. Students were expected to be based primarily on one campus but might need to attend some classes on other campuses. Academic staff were to be attached to a School and have one campus as a home base but would be expected to teach at other campuses as required. Overall there is little doubt that the reorganization plan was an ambitious attempt to establish a highly centralized multi-campus college thus subsuming the individual identities and programmes of the previously autonomous colleges.

Not surprisingly this bold approach, particularly when combined with the uncertain employment scene for academic staff, resulted in considerable turmoil in the College. Furthermore, one section of the Report recommended major changes to the teacher education programme which were presented in the Report as continuing the 'tradition of the superseded colleges that teacher education should be vocationally directed and applied in emphasis'. Liddelow (1982, p. 140) However, much of the essence of the recommended change was seen by many critics as *narrowing* the approach that they, in fact, had developed and been using in their own separate teacher education programmes. Many staff were also concerned about the same courses in education being taught on all campuses both because of the lack of diversity envisioned as well as the potentially time consuming travel that might result. In fact, a considerable amount of the overall negative reaction to amalgamation was arguably to the *form* of the amalgamated institutional arrangements in terms of their degree of

centralization, or to the particular style of teacher education promoted in the reorganization report, rather than to amalgamation *per se*. However, it was the amalgamation which had created these issues.

The campus Principals were also in a difficult position in that the boundaries around their previous domains would be removed with the proposed school rather than campus organizations. Also, obviously not all of the general administrations of the separate colleges could be absorbed in one single administration of one college. Traditionally principals of such colleges had been very much in charge of everything that happened in 'their' institution. But the proposal was to change the line of command from the campus to the school of study, a very different creature and one which would emphasize educational leadership more than general administrative skills. In the event, of the eight most senior staff, three remained in general administration while the remaining five were moved into work with academic programmes.

In November 1982, the newly appointed College Council (replacing the Interim Council) accepted the broad thrusts of the Programme Review Report indicating 1983 would be a year of planning while 1984 would be the first year of programme implementation. During the latter half of 1982 the upheaval within the College had reached outside institutional boundaries and was being reported in the local press and questions were being raised in Parliament. Parliamentary questions concentrated on the number and manner of staff dismissals; unrenewed contracts or job changes; the proposed submergence of the identity of the previously autonomous colleges; the extent of staff involvement in the operating decision making structure, and the role of the Director of the College. The Labor Party in Opposition and in particular the Shadow Minister for Education, Bob Pearce, made strident attacks on the Government and the administration of the College asserting that despite amalgamation there would be a re-examination of the autonomy of the separate campuses should Labour come to power. In fact the Labor Party did win office early in 1983 and Mr Pearce became Minister for Education.

In summary the major issues which emerged during the beginning of the implementation period of amalgamation revolved around the following areas:

- The results of the federal financial cuts and particularly those related to the contraction of teacher education. As the College Council attempted to protect tenured academic staff, contract and other part-time staff were let go. In addition, in the process many staff were either moved to other teaching areas, to administration, or offered retraining. These considerable staffing changes resulted in a serious staff morale problem.

- The Programme Review Report on the future direction of academic and administrative reorganization advocated dramatic changes with the creation of a multi-purpose, multi-campus, centralized college with particularly significant changes for teacher education. This was on top of the uncertainties to nearly every other aspect of academic careers. Aside from the worthiness or not of the model of amalgamation proposed, simply the scale of change it sought to introduce ensured further turmoil in the early days.
- The emphasis in the Programme Review Report on School rather than campus organization clearly undermined the existing power structures in the individual colleges and was perceived as doing so. Consequently, and not surprisingly, many staff members were threatened, especially those with administrative responsibilities under the old structure.
- The turmoil within the College was sufficiently great to be picked up outside by the press and the politicians, resulting in Parliamentary questions and answers about amalgamation. As a result there were a number of promises made by the Opposition regarding their future approach to the form of amalgamation, and to the administration and governance of the College.

#### **Implications for College Council**

During 1983 and 1984 the upheaval in the College continued. It was fanned by departing contract staff, some of whom went to the press with complaints of their perceived ill-treatment. Within the A.L.P. there were a number of people involved in contributing to educational policy development who were strongly opposed to both the form and the manner of the amalgamation. A variety of concerned individuals and groups paid frequent visits to the Minister for Education. The heavy load of new programme planning going on during 1983 in preparation for 1984 meant that staff were having to maintain the on-going programme, consider significant changes to their own teaching, and help to produce the blueprints for the new and revised programmes for the following year.

The new Minister for Education made it clear that he intended to draft a new Act for the amalgamated College which would give the government more say by revamping the composition of the College Council, and that he also intended to implement structures to deal with some of his concerns about the loss of campus autonomy. This legislation was delayed somewhat by the state government's initial focus on changes in primary and secondary rather than tertiary education in W.A. (i.e. the 'Beazley Report'). However, by mid 1984 the new Western Australian College of Advanced Education Act was gazetted, the existing College Council was thanked for their services, and an entirely new Council appointed. The old Council had, of course, been appointed by the previous Liberal government. While there is no



question whatsoever as to their integrity and competence during a very difficult period, it was felt in some Labor government circles that had they kept a tighter control over events with less deference to the education 'professionals', the situation might not have become so tumultuous. Whether that might have been the case or not, it does raise serious questions about the large expectations as well as the membership, of unpaid community based governing bodies appointed by politicians to oversee various government and semi-government instrumentalities.

The new Labor government appointed College Council did reflect a broader cross section of the community than is often typical on tertiary governing bodies. For example, out of twenty members, seven were women. The Council also included a number of members with considerable experience in education which reflected the Government's concern that Councils 'understand' education. Thus the chairperson was a Senior Lecturer in Education at Murdoch University and other Governor's appointments included a Principal of a state high school, the General Secretary of the State School Teacher's Union, an Officer from the Catholic Education Commission, and the Aboriginal Development Co-ordinator from the Education Department. The rest of the Community appointments were filled by a medical practitioner, the Manager of Women's Information Service with the Commonwealth Bank, and Organiser with the Hospital Services and Miscellaneous Workers' Union, the Chairperson of the W.A. Arts Council, a chartered accountant, and a barrister. Other membership on the Council included two elected academic staff representatives, one elected non-academic staff representative, one alumni representative, two student representatives, and three ex-officio members: the Director, the Chair of the Bunbury Institute, and the Chair of the Board of Management of the Academy of Performing Arts. In addition the new College Act established Campus Committees, all of which were to be chaired by a community based member of College Council. Their terms of reference included the broad oversight of campus-based programmes and activities, and the promotion of individual campus ethos.

The Campus Committees were clearly the government's response to their earlier concerns about the loss of the identity of the separate colleges. Nevertheless, the Campus Committees in fact have not yet developed a clear role in the College. Primarily this may be because the School and Department programme structures and the academic committee structure are mostly independent of the campuses and how they should best relate to each other is conceptually complicated. They do relate satisfactorily to the administrative structure which does include an essential campus component. Another problem may be one of the time of unpaid community-based chairpersons who must deal with campus matters and meetings as well as College Council meetings and subcommittees.

The Campus Committees also include 'the senior academic' on a campus, but with the demise of Principals such people are also usually Heads of Schools and hence although they are senior their principal attention is directed to the hierarchy in which they predominantly operate, i.e. the Schools and their constituent Departments. It may be that the Committees simply need more time to develop their potential. In any event in terms of the new legislation the Campus Committees enable campus concerns to be injected into the system but they do not provide for clear-cut campus autonomy. Thus the new government once in power went part of the way but not all of the way in response to the concerns about autonomy and centralization from some quarters.

Another political event that arguably bore a relation to the amalgamation controversy at the College was the establishment by the state government of a parliamentary committee to make recommendations on the structure and role of the governing bodies of all four tertiary institutions in W.A. The Minister for Education, Mr Pearce has been publicly critical of the composition and role of the Senate at the University of Western Australia in particular. However, that, combined with the continuing high profile of the College problems may have contributed to sensitizing him to tertiary governing bodies in general, and to his perception of the need for more community-responsive governing Councils and Senates. The Hetherington Report came out in mid-1984 and made a series of recommendations along this line which have not yet been acted upon by the state government but which are likely to result in legislation in the tertiary area in 1987.

The primary way in which amalgamation continues to affect College Council four years down the road can be observed in the nature of the business of Council. A very large proportion of agenda items in Council and its subcommittees relate to issues or projects that have spun out of amalgamation. These are not all 'problems' in a negative sense, although some are, but rather items that would not have existed without amalgamation. Below are some examples which have emerged or affected Council business. They are categorized as relating to the multi-purpose character of the amalgamated college, the multi-campus feature, centralization, amalgamation policy, or the overall College structure.

#### **Multi-Purpose Issues**

- The fact that teacher education is still the largest component of the College means that many other programmes are forced to gear their offerings around education, which some education people consider appropriate but some non-education people find frustrating.

- The fact that the vast majority of key administrators in the College originally came from education also contributes to the feeling by non-education staff of living under a regime of educational colonialism.
- The fact that the majority of education staff are not used to the differential treatment of different academic areas that historically exists in multi-purpose institutions like universities (e.g. the arts - science funding differences) means that there are constant expectations of similar treatment for everyone which may or may not actually be adequate for some areas.
- The overall need for the College to develop and offer many new courses in new areas to meet its multi-purpose goal (especially in the new Schools to which Nursing has recently been added) has been an extremely demanding and time consuming task for many academic staff and administrators producing stress as well as the opportunity for innovation.

### **Multi-Campus Issues**

- The lack of ease of reporting to a Head of a Department or School when a staff member is not on the same campus is an issue for some.
- Decisions about what to teach on which campus are controversial and produce uncertainty until they are made, as well as concern about how staff can feed into the decision making process, in the new more complex institution.
- In general communication channels are infinitely more complicated in a multi-campus situation and require continual thought and planning.
- The logistic problems for the Student Guild are considerable.
- Implementation of college-wide policies such as the new Equal Opportunity plans involve much careful work to ensure they are 'evenly spread'.

### **Centralization Issues**

- In general there is the problem of finding the right balance between an appropriate college-wide policy and one which is so 'general' that it makes no sense in the specific context of a particular School, Department, Institute, Academy, campus, staff member or student.
- There is some resentment that the major College administration is based on one campus, Churchlands, resulting in some staff and students feeling 'controlled' by another campus.
- The semi-autonomous legislated character of the Academy of Performing Arts, combined with its joint C.A.E. and T.A.F.E. funding, and its audition-entry and performance-exit criteria means that it does not fit comfortably into a centralized academic C.A.E. structure and has resulted in many developmental issues.

- The same legislated semi-autonomy of the Bunbury Institute of Advanced Education combined with its initial support by the state government for capital works but not recurrent expenditure also has the potential for conflict about centralization-decentralization as well as resource issues.

### **Amalgamation Policy Issues**

- The initial request by the government and early Council policy to advertise positions internally in the first instance has kept the tenured staff employed but eventually raises issues of the adequacy of appointments and the closed nature of the exercise.
- The large number of permanent staff appointed to administrative positions in an acting capacity as a temporary policy has maintained flexibility during amalgamation but also contributed to staff uncertainty.
- A variety of individual staffing issues relating to decisions taken at amalgamation (including non-renewal of contracts) has resulted in time consuming clarification of personal situations and highlighted the need for the formation of more general staffing policies.
- In general the establishment of the large number of new academic structures and buildings needed to fulfil the blueprint of the reorganization plan have required major commitments from many sections of the College. These have been challenging but also frequently stressful for everyone involved and post-amalgamation 'burn-out' is a very real phenomenon.

### **Overall College Structure Issues**

- The on-going debate about the role of the Campus Committees and the related central issue of campus autonomy has already been mentioned as an item of concern to many.
- The concern by the College Council to ensure that the amalgamation - established organizational and administrative structures are working as smoothly as possible has resulted in a decision to appoint an outside consultant group to examine the present system four years on and make recommendations as necessary as to changes needed. It is hoped that some of the aforementioned issues may be resolved through this process. That this examination is considered necessary reflects the extensive and lasting impact of the amalgamation itself.



## Conclusion

While this paper has attempted to highlight the continuing impact of amalgamation on one tertiary institution, it needs to be stressed that amalgamation has not all or even primarily been a negative process. Indeed there is little doubt that in the Australian political climate small tertiary institutions are exceedingly vulnerable and the creation of a large, multi-purpose, multi-campus institution like W.A.C.A.E. opens up enormous potential for growth and development. This can be seen in the development of the many new strong academic programs successfully accredited, in the increasing qualification level of academic staff, in the diversity of applied research engaged in, in the high profile the College has taken in providing a wide variety of services to the community all over the state, and in the stature the College is developing as W.A.'s fourth tertiary institution. Given the state government's change of the Western Australian Institute of Technology to the Curtin University of Technology, it is likely that W.A.C.A.E. will become the major provider of C.A.E. sector education in Western Australia, a highly significant role and one which the College is arguably better able to take on as the large, diverse amalgamated institution it has become.

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## WHAT HAPPENED TO THE NATIONAL REVIEW OF TEACHER EDUCATION?

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### Introduction

Inquiries and reviews of teacher education have occurred with remarkable regularity in Australia over recent years. What is also remarkable about these often major and expensive enterprises is how regularly their recommendations have been deflected or ignored.

We are all familiar with the political and bureaucratic strategy of using inquiries or evaluations to give the impression of serious intent or to delay positive action. But, after so many inquiries making similar recommendations with so little effect, the time has come to consider whether the reasons for inaction may not lie elsewhere. It may be that little happens because the task of implementing reform proposals is not one's final responsibility. The buck stops nowhere in particular. Action based on recommendations typical of these reviews has required commitment from the Commonwealth Minister for Education and a co-ordinated response from federal agencies, such as the Commonwealth Schools Commission (CSC), and state-level employing authorities and teacher unions. One reason why such action has not taken place is because there is no national body which brings such parties together with the responsibility for co-ordinating policy and planning with respect to teacher education. This deficiency is particularly apparent when teacher education is regarded, as all the recent enquiries have argued it should be, as a continuum embracing both pre- and in-service education. There is also a pressing need for co-ordinating authorities at the state-level which could bring employing authorities, teacher organizations and tertiary institutions together over matters concerned with professional development across this continuum.

All states, except Tasmania, have conducted major inquiries into teacher education since 1978. *The National Inquiry into Teacher Education* (1980) was one of the most comprehensive (and expensive) investigations into teacher education ever conducted in Australia. Except for Queensland, which has a powerful statutory authority, the Board of Teacher Education, the recommendations of these inquiries have led to few changes in teacher education policy or practice. Following the National Inquiry in Teacher Education (NITE), the Commonwealth Minister of Education passed the responsibility for implementing the recommendations of the report, which he had initiated, to state employing authorities and individual tertiary institutions. CTEC, representative of a wide range of interests other than